

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

Please replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application with the following list of claims:

1-39. (Cancelled)

40. (Currently amended) A method for restoring or maintaining normal aggregation of platelets in blood or extracellular fluid of a patient subject to or susceptible to lipopolysaccharide (LPS)-induced generalized coagulation dysfunction, said method comprising administering to the blood or the extracellular fluid of a patient in need of an increased concentration of gelsolin a therapeutically effective amount of gelsolin, or a functionally equivalent peptide fragment thereof, to restore or maintain normal aggregation of platelets in the blood or extracellular fluid of the patient.

41. (Currently amended) The method of claim 40, wherein following the administration of the therapeutically effective amount of the gelsolin, or the functionally equivalent peptide fragment thereof, the blood or the extracellular fluid comprises an increased concentration of gelsolin, as compared with [[the]] a level of gelsolin obtained from the patient before administration.

42. (Currently amended) The method of claim 41, wherein the increased concentration of the gelsolin in the patient restores or maintains the normal aggregation of the platelets in the patient.

43-47. (Cancelled)

48. (Currently amended) The method of claim 40, wherein the gelsolin, ~~or the functionally equivalent peptide fragment thereof, comprises~~ is plasma gelsolin, or a functionally equivalent peptide fragment thereof.

49. (Currently amended) The method of claim 40, wherein the gelsolin, or the functionally equivalent peptide fragment thereof, comprises amino acid residues 160-169 of the gelsolin.

50. (Currently amended) The method of claim 40, wherein the gelsolin, ~~or the functionally equivalent peptide fragment thereof, comprises~~ is recombinantly produced or expressed gelsolin, or a functionally equivalent peptide fragment thereof.

51. (Previously presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the gelsolin, or the functionally equivalent peptide fragment thereof, comprises SEQ ID NO: 1.